



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 15 | Vayeshev | Sichah 4 | Chanukah

Fill the Pit

Translated by Mendel Greenbaum

General Editor: Rabbi Eliezer Robbins | **Editor:** Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger

Content Editor: Rabbi Zalmy Avtzon

© Copyright by Sichos In English 2023 ◦ 5784

A note on the translation: Rounded and square brackets reflect their use in the original *sichah*; curly brackets are interpolations of the translator or editor. The footnotes in curly brackets are those of the translator or editors and do not correspond to the footnotes in the original. Words in bold type are italicized in the original text.

Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

Feedback is appreciated — please send comments to info@projectlikkuteisichos.org

We find in the Gemara¹ (in its discussion of the subject of Chanukah) an interpretation of the verse, “and the pit was empty, there was no water in it”:²

Rav Kahana said that Rav Nassan bar Minyomi taught in the name of Rav Tanchum: What is the meaning of the verse, “and the pit was empty, there was no water in it”? By inference from the statement, “and the pit was empty,” would I not know there was no water in it? So why does the verse also say, ‘there was no water in it’? {To teach us that} there was no water in it, but snakes and scorpions were in it.

At first glance, the Gemara cites this teaching (on the clause, “and the pit was empty...”) in its discussion of Chanukah because the author of this teaching is the same as that of the previous teaching (“Rav Kahana said that Rav Nassan bar Minyomi taught in the name of Rav Tanchum: ‘A **Chanukah** lamp...’”).³ However, as discussed numerous times, every concept in the Torah is precise. Therefore, when the Gemara cites a teaching in a certain subject area, it is not (only) for some trivial reason ({such as it being taught by} the same author), but because this teaching is germane to the discussion in which it is cited.

Accordingly, it is understood in our discussion that the statement mentioned above is associated with and has the same content as Chanukah. This is particularly pertinent in light of what the *Shelah* writes at the beginning of our *parshah* — that *parshiyos Vayeishev*, *Mikeitz*, and *Vayigash* share a connection to Chanukah — and that the verse, “and the pit was empty, there was no water in it,” is recorded in *parshas Vayeishev*.

¹ *Shabbos* 22a (as well as *Chagigah* 3a), cited by Rashi in his commentary on the verse.

² *Bereishis* 37:24.

³ Akin to Rashi’s commentary on *Chagigah*, *ibid*.

2.

NO WATER AND NO TORAH

Our Sages taught:⁴ “Water refers **only** to Torah.” From this statement, it is understood that whenever the Torah mentions “water,” this is (also) an allusion to “Torah.” This is especially true of the verse, “and the pit was empty, there was no **water** in it,” which the Midrash explicitly says alludes to the Torah:⁵ “*The pit was empty* — Yaakov’s pit was emptied; *there was no water in it* — it contained no words of Torah, symbolized by water....”

This is also the deeper meaning of our Sages’ statement, “There was no water in it, but there were snakes and scorpions in it” [and especially since the Midrash cites both interpretations — (a) “*there was no water in it*, but there were snakes and scorpions in it,” and (b) “*there was no water in it* — there were no words of Torah in it” — in **succession**]:

When a person is in a state in which there are “no words of Torah in him”⁶ (“no water in him”), “snakes and scorpions in him” will **automatically follow**. There is no intermediate stage. This means that the deficiency of someone with “no words of Torah in him” is not only his lack of **Torah** (although he may continue to immerse himself in **permissible** matters), but moreover, the “pit” will automatically fill with “snakes and scorpions” — things that **oppose** and **fight** holiness.⁷

This is akin to the Baal Shem Tov’s interpretation⁸ of the verse,⁹ “*You will turn astray and serve* — when a person separates himself from Hashem, he **immediately** serves idols, with no **intermediary** stage.”

This explains why the Torah does not explicitly mention that “there were snakes and scorpions in it” since this does not need to be noted, as we can

⁴ *Bava Kama* 17a, and sources cited there.

⁵ *Bereishis Rabbah*, sec. 84, par. 16.

⁶ {In Hebrew, the word “בו” can mean “in it” or “in him.”}

⁷ Note *Maamar “Basi LeGani 5699,”* beg. of ch. 9; *Hemshech “Basi LeGani 5710,”* ch. 8.

⁸ *Tzavaas HaRivash* ch. 76 (Kehot publ., 5735); see the references and citations there.

⁹ *Devarim* 11:16.

deduce this from (and this is a consequence of) the verse, “There was no water in it.” In other words, “There were snakes and scorpions in it” is an **automatic** consequence of “no water in it.”

Therefore, the Midrash cites these two interpretations in succession; each interpretation hinges on and is clarified by the other: “There were snakes and scorpions in it” follows automatically from “there was no water in it — there were no words of Torah in it.” And for this very reason, something **contrary** to the Torah ensued — the sale of Yosef.

3.

NO WATER = SNAKES AND SCORPIONS

Seemingly, we may ask: The Baal Shem Tov’s interpretation mentioned above on the clause “you turn astray and serve,” which discusses the essential connection and attachment a Jew has to Hashem is very well understood. Simply by turning away (“you turn astray”) from (his attachment to) Hashem, he already encounters the **opposite** — “*and serve* — he immediately serves idols” (at the very least, a subtle form of idol worship).¹⁰

In our case, however, which discusses a deficiency in the Torah (“water”), why, if there is an absence of the Torah, **must** there automatically exist “snakes and scorpions” in **opposition** to the Torah?

We also need to clarify: As known, Yosef’s brothers maintained that he was, by **law**, liable for the death penalty (as they were sure that Yosef was “plotting to entrap them and have them killed.”¹¹ Consequently, the law of the “pursuer”¹² applied to him, or {he deserved the death penalty} for other crimes — as explained by the Torah commentaries).¹³ —

¹⁰ See Tanya, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 20 ff.

¹¹ Seforno on Bereishis 37:18 {cf. Shmuel I 28:9 for similar wording}.

¹² {“*Rodef*” in the original Hebrew; a pursuer who is intent on killing his victim may be killed if killing him is the only viable way of stopping the pursuer.}

¹³ Or HaChaim on Bereishis 37:20; various explanations of Rashi throughout the *parshah*; beg. of *Parashas Derachim*; et al.

Why, then, does the Midrash state that because of their desire to kill Yosef, “Yaakov’s pit was emptied... there were no words of Torah in it” (which insinuates that the brothers, G-d forbid, did not take into account the “words of Torah” when they rationalized that killing Yosef would have been following Torah law)?

4.

WATER MEANING BITTUL

This will be understood by prefacing with the reason that our Sages use “water” as a metaphor for Torah:

Torah is compared “to several things, to bread, wine, and oil,” etc., each of which denotes a different dimension and characteristic of Torah.¹⁴ Regarding the Torah’s dimension of “water,” our Sages expound:¹⁵ “Why are words of Torah comparable to water? ... To inform you that just as water leaves a high place and flows to a low place, so, too, the words of Torah are retained only by someone whose spirit is lowly.” This implies that “water” is not a metaphor for the Torah itself¹⁶ but for the sense of *bittul*¹⁷ and lowliness necessary in the person studying Torah.¹⁸

This resolves the statement in the Midrash mentioned above: “Yaakov’s pit was emptied... there were no words of Torah in it”: Although the brothers preserved the Torah and Torah law, they were still lacking the “water” element of Torah (“and the pit was empty, there was no **water** in it,” as explained below in Section 8) — the level of *bittul* that was **proportionate to their greatness**. This idea {that *bittul* must be proportionate to a person’s level} is understood

¹⁴ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shir HaShirim*,” beg. of the second *Maamar* “*Tz’edah uR’edah*.”

¹⁵ *Taanis* 7a.

¹⁶ In **this** statement of our Sages.

¹⁷ {*Bittul* connotes submission to Hashem, self-abnegation, humility, and the negation of ego. It is the antithesis of *yeshus*.}

¹⁸ So too in its comparative supernal attribute as if it were — the level of “water” is Hashem’s “humility,” that which “the Torah **descended** from its place of glory... and from there it journeyed and descended...” (*Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 4).

from the bowing in the *Amidah* prayer (and the *bittul* that is {thereby} emphasized). While the regular protocol is to bow when saying “blessed” and to straighten up when saying Hashem’s name, {when it comes to} “the king, once he has bowed, does not straighten up {until the end of the prayer}.”¹⁹

However, this further strengthens the above question: How can it be that when the only thing lacking is that there is “no water in it,” there will automatically be “snakes and scorpions in it”? Why is it that just for missing {the proper sense of} *bittul* and lowliness while learning, the person must be overcome by “snakes and scorpions” — which **oppose** Torah?!

5.

CONNECTING TO THE GIVER OF THE TORAH

The explanation: The main point of Torah is that by learning it, a person connects himself to the **Giver** of the Torah. This is why the sense of *bittul* and lowliness is an essential provision {for its study}. As long as a person exists in his own right, he is still constrained by the **limitations** inherent in a created being. He cannot then connect to the Giver of the Torah, Who is **limitless**. Only by learning while in a state of absolute *bittul* is a person freed from his boundaries and limitations and is enabled to connect with the limitlessness of the Giver of the Torah.

In light of this, the progression in the prayer,²⁰ “Let my soul be as dust for all, open my heart to Your Torah,” is understood.

Seemingly, the study of Torah (“open my heart to Your Torah”) must be done passionately with intellectual comprehension (which may only occur when the intellect, and generally all of a person’s faculties, are felt to be important), whereas {the entreaty}, “let my soul be as dust **for all**” {is a call for the}

¹⁹ *Berachos* 34b.

²⁰ *Berachos* 17a: “*Elokai netzor...*” {*Siddur*, conclusion of the *Amidah* prayer}.

negation and **nullification** of one's existence, which conflicts with studying Torah passionately and with comprehension, etc. —

{The explanation:} When can {the prayer,} “open my heart to **Your Torah**” — {emphasizing} Your Torah — be actualized? When can a person be a proper receptacle to **Hashem's** Torah, which is unlimited? Only when he first has complete *bittul* — (not just any *bittul*, but) {such a *bittul* that he feels} “**as dust for all**,” “**all** tread upon it.”²¹ With such *bittul*, he will be capable of “receiving” **Hashem's** Torah.²² Afterward (comes the stage of “you will labor”²³ — by exerting his cognitive faculties), he can absorb Hashem's wisdom with his inner faculties — “open **my heart** to your Torah.”

6.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING TORAH

This clarifies something perplexing regarding Torah study: **Speaking** words of Torah has an advantage over **understanding** Torah.²⁴

The law is that “one who thinks words of Torah is not required to recite the blessings”²⁵ (on Torah), for “thought is not equivalent to speech,” and “one does not fulfill his obligation that, ‘you shall teach them’²⁶ through anything studied solely in thought and not expressed {in speech} when having the opportunity to do so.”²⁷ Moreover, understanding Torah is related to articulating {words of} Torah, as our Sages expound²⁸ regarding the verse,²⁹ “*For they are life for those*

²¹ See *Eruvin* 54a: “If a person makes himself like this desert, upon which everyone treads, his study will endure.”; *Likkutei Torah*, “*Bamidbar*,” 15c; et al.

²² In accord with the statement of our Sages (*Berachos* 22a), “Just as there, {by Sinai, you were} in reverence and in fear... so too, here {whenever a person studies Torah}....”

²³ {See *Megillah* 6b.}

²⁴ For the topic of the effectiveness of “speech” in the study of Torah — See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” beg. of ch. 37 (that it is for the sake of refining the animal soul etc.); *Maamar* “*Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShanah 5659*” (that it benefits and adds to the intellect — see there in detail); et al.

²⁵ Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 47, par. 2.

²⁶ {*Devarim* 11:19.}

²⁷ Alter Rebbe's *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, sec. 2, par. 12.

²⁸ *Eruvin* 54a.

²⁹ *Mishlei* 4:22.

who find them — Do not read: ‘For those who find them, *lemotzeihem*,’ but ‘for those who express them, *lemotza’eihem*, with his mouth,” and, “if it is arranged (not only in the “mouth,” but) in your 248 limbs, it will be secure; and if not, it will not be secure.”³⁰

But, seemingly, *Shulchan Aruch*³¹ rules that if a person speaks words of Torah (of the Oral Torah) but does not understand what he is saying, “It is not considered to be study **at all**.” This intimates that comprehending what is being learned constitutes learning (the Oral Torah). As such, why is **speaking** Torah so crucial, to the extent that in its absence (one is not only “not required to recite the blessings,” and does not fulfill “his obligation that ‘you shall teach them,’” but furthermore), “it will not be secure” — he will not even retain his comprehension of Torah?

7.

SPEAKING HASHEM’S TORAH

The explanation of this issue is similar to what was explained above. The principal {aspect} of the Torah is the connection it forges between a person and the **Giver** of the Torah. Therefore, even the **study** of Torah must be such that the grasp and comprehension of a concept is (not as it would be from the perspective of the intellect of a created being, but rather) as it is from **Hashem’s** perspective (“His Torah,” that of the Holy One).

From here, it is clear that having a sense of *bittul* (only) **before** learning Torah is insufficient. Instead, the study itself must be conducted with *bittul*.³² This is why, when studying, a person must “express them **with his mouth**,” and even — “ordered **in your 248 limbs**”:

³⁰ *Eruvin* 54a; Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 4, par. 9.

³¹ Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 2, par. 13.

³² Note *Shabbos* (30b): “Any Torah scholar who sits before his teacher and his lips are not dripping with bitterness.... Ultimately, he {Rabba, after making a humorous remark before beginning to study} would sit in trepidation and begin teaching.”

When a Jew learns Torah only using his cognitive and intellectual faculties — the most sublime quality of humanity — he still retains his “existence” (as an autonomous being) and cannot absorb Hashem’s Torah. This can be inferred using a *kal vachomer*³³ from {the impossibility of} “an elephant going through the eye of a needle”:³⁴ Since it is completely impossible for an “elephant,” despite being a finite creature, to pass through “the eye of a needle” (to the extent that such a thing cannot even be **dreamt** of), simply because “the eye of a needle” is yet smaller, how much more is it impossible for the Torah, which is bound up with **Hashem** (the King’s delight in His essence),³⁵ Who is the truest unlimited Existence, to enter and be grasped by the intellect of a finite and limited person.

—

Therefore, {this grasp of the Torah} is “not secure.” It will leave no lasting impression on him (as he exists within his limitations), and as the Gemara recounts,³⁶ “one student... who would study quietly... **forgot** his studies.”

In contrast, when a person condescends, as it were, to link his learning to his “mouth” and (even lower) to his “248 limbs,” which are inferior to intellect — the distinctive feature of people — he humbles himself. Then, the Torah he learns permeates all his 248 limbs and nullifies his existence.³⁷ Then, specifically, “Hashem’s Torah,” which is unlimited, can be **absorbed** inwardly — his Torah is then “secure.”

³³ {Lit., “light and heavy,” *kal vachomer* is a Talmudic logical proof, whereby a strict ruling in a lenient case demands a similarly strict ruling in a more stringent case; alternatively, a lenient ruling in a stringent case demands a similarly lenient ruling in a lenient case.}

³⁴ *Berachos* 55b.

³⁵ {The most sublime level of the Torah; cf. *Mishlei* 8:30.}

³⁶ *Eruvin* 54a.

³⁷ See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5659 p. 148; *Sefer HaSichos* p. 76; note *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 6 (p. 116), which explains that Man is called “Speaker,” מדבר, because it is speech that expresses the true spirit and **simplicity** of the soul that is beyond the “existence” of Man. Examine there carefully.

8.

NO WATER = NO HASHEM'S TORAH

On this basis, the teaching of our Sages — “there was no water in it, but there were snakes and scorpions in it” — is well understood. (They teach, as explained above, that if there is “no water in it,” there will automatically be “snakes and scorpions in it.”):

Since the Torah’s principal aspect is the connection with the **Giver** of the Torah achieved using **bittul** on the part of the person studying, there is no place for an “intermediary”: If he has *bittul* to the Giver of the Torah, then his learning will be aligned with the **truth** of the Torah (as it reflects the will of the **Giver** of the Torah). If, however, the “water” (*bittul*) in the Torah is not there, Heaven forbid, then the person will miss the **relationship** with the Giver of the Torah. (As explained above, this dependency is learned through *kal vachomer* from “an elephant going through the eye of a needle.”) Consequently, there will be “snakes and scorpions in it”(analogous to when “you turn astray and [you will consequently, immediately] serve {other deities}”): Not only is he detached from the **Torah** (based on our Sages’ teaching,³⁸ “It will not be found by the haughty of spirit...”), but he thereby also **opposes** holiness, in line with our Sages’ exposition,³⁹ “He and I cannot dwell together.” Furthermore, “it is as if he were an idol worshiper... who denies the existence of Hashem”⁴⁰ (as it says, “**and {you will} serve {other deities}**”).

This is also how the Midrash depicts Yosef’s brothers, as mentioned above: “Yaakov’s pit was emptied... there were no words of Torah in it”: They were not, G-d forbid, deficient in (the actual **study** of) Torah (for they presumed Yosef to be, **by law**, deserving of death). However, the “water” element of the Torah — the *bittul* — was missing, at least to the degree called for by their greatness. Therefore, their verdict regarding Yosef’s punishment was incorrect.

³⁸ *Eruvin* 55a.

³⁹ *Sotah* 5a.

⁴⁰ *Sotah* 4b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Deos*,” ch. 2, par. 3; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 156, par. 3.

9.

BEFORE AND AFTER THE GIVING OF THE TORAH

The narratives in our *parshah* of the events involving Yosef and his brothers were harbingers of the exile and exodus from Egypt (for Yosef's sale led to Yaakov and his sons' descent into Egypt), the final objective of which was the Giving of the Torah.⁴¹

The same applies to the concept that “there was no water in it, but there were snakes and scorpions in it,” as taught by the Torah in this week's *parshah*. This was pertinent to the general concept of the Giving of the Torah, for the dimension of “water” in Torah — the *bittul* that is required by the person studying to connect himself to the **Giver** of the Torah — was **primarily**⁴² achieved by the Giving of the Torah.

The difference between our forefathers' study of the Torah before the Giving of the Torah and their descendants' study of it afterward: Our forefathers' study of it relied upon individual effort, limited by **human** understanding. However, after the Giving of the Torah, a transformative change occurred. The Torah became a divine gift from Hashem Himself, intended for every Jew. This transition elevated the Torah from merely human comprehension to being “His Torah,” **given** to us by the Holy One.⁴³ This divine nature of the Torah is evident in the **requirement** for **every** Jew to recite blessings over it **daily**.

The difference between our forefathers' study of the Torah before the Giving of the Torah and their descendants' study afterward: Before the Giving of the Torah, the study was a function of “a person's own effort” — his grasp of Torah was only according to the capability of a **created being** to grasp and understand. The novel accomplishment of the Giving of the Torah is — “{Hashem has} **given** us His Torah” — that the Torah, as **His** Torah (that of the

⁴¹ {The event of the giving of the Torah, on 6 Sivan 2448, at Mt. Sinai.} See at length *Torah Or*, “*Shemos*” (*Maamar “Ve'Eileh Shemos”*; end of *Maamar “Haboim Yashresh Yaakov”*).

⁴² For there needed to be a semblance of this before the Giving of the Torah as well (as a precursor for the Giving of the Torah).

⁴³ {From the blessing recited before the study of Torah.}

Holy One, “the King’s personal delights”), was given by Hashem to **every** Jew (as is also understood from the **ruling** that **every** Jew — **every** day — is obligated to recite the blessings over the Torah).

This also explains the teaching of our Sages:⁴⁴ “Initially, Moshe would study Torah and forget it, until it was given to him as a gift....” This teaching seems quite perplexing: Even before the Giving of the Torah, some studied the Torah, as our Sages teach,⁴⁵ “From the days of our ancestors, *yeshivah*⁴⁶ study never departed from them,” and they obviously did not forget what they had learned (especially considering that otherwise, the study could not be considered to be “*yeshivah*” study). How can it be that **specifically** after the Giving of the Torah, “Moshe would study... **and forget it**”?

Rather, this is the explanation: The study before the Giving of the Torah was of a level in Torah germane to creation, and therefore, it could be assimilated internally. In contrast, at the Giving of the Torah, Hashem gave Moshe “His Torah,” a Torah that is entirely beyond creation, unable to be assimilated by a created being through his own efforts. Therefore, “Moshe would study Torah **and forget it**” (akin to what we discussed earlier (in Section 7) about {the Torah being} “not secure”) —

“Until it was given to him as a gift”: Hashem, who is omnipotent and can join the infinite with the finite, had “given to him” **His** Torah, which is **limitless** — and “anyone who gives, gives generously.”⁴⁷ And it was given as a present (which is not given in exchange for its value) to a **limited**, created being.

And so it is for **every** Jew. He may assimilate Hashem’s Torah internally (“secure”), for “{Hashem has} **given** to us His Torah” — Hashem gave it to him as a **present**.

[On the other hand, although Jews “take” the Torah with the power of “the **Giver** (of the Torah),” a **person** must concurrently have *bittul* to ensure that

⁴⁴ *Nedarim* 38a.

⁴⁵ *Yoma* 28b.

⁴⁶ {Fixed study.}

⁴⁷ *Bava Basra* 53a, and citations there.

his Torah is “secure” (as discussed at length above). Since the objective is for all lofty things to be received by the Jews through their **avodah** (and not in the way of “shameful bread”),⁴⁸ the person, therefore, must do something **on his part** to make himself (to a certain extent) fit to assimilate Hashem’s Torah⁴⁹ — and this is through the sense of *bittul*, whereby he goes “out” of his existence and limitations, as discussed above.]⁵⁰

10.

PURE OIL AND HASHEM’S TORAH

In light of the above, we can now understand the connection between the teaching of our Sages, “There was no water in it...” and the theme of Chanukah (which would be an additional reason why the Gemara cited this teaching in the course of its discussion of the subject of Chanukah):

The meaning behind the nuanced wording of the phrase (in the prayer “*VeAl HaNissim*”), “when the wicked Greek government rose up... to make them forget **Your** Torah...” is well known.⁵¹ The Greeks had sought to erase from the memory of the Jewish people (**not** the intellectual properties of Torah, by wresting the Jews away from Torah study altogether, but rather) how the Torah is “**Your** Torah,” **Hashem’s** Torah:

The Greeks, therefore, **defiled** “all the oils in the Sanctuary”⁵² without actually **discarding** the oil,⁵³ since “oil” symbolizes wisdom.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ {An unearned gift.} See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 94 ff.

⁴⁹ This is a further concept, in addition to the grounds for the giving of the present “that had the recipient not brought him pleasure, he would not have **given** him a present” (see *Megillah* 26b; *Gittin* 50b; *Bava Metzia* 16a; *Bava Basra* 156a).

⁵⁰ In light of this, we may explain why most of the mitzvos in the Ten Commandments “are simple matters that even mortal intellect would necessitate” (*Likkutei Torah*, “*Bamidbar*,” 12c). Specifically, through a person’s “descent” into these ideas, which demonstrates *bittul* and lack of his own existence, is it possible for the Giving of the Torah to occur (similar to what was explained earlier regarding speaking words of Torah).

⁵¹ See *Maamar* “*Mai Chanukah* 5701,” et al; and at length — *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 815.

⁵² *Shabbos* 21b.

⁵³ See *Likkutei Sichos*, *ibid.*; vol. 2, p. 481 ff.; et al.

⁵⁴ See Rabbi Chaim Vital’s annotations to *Zohar*, vol. 2 , 147b; *Torah Or* 40d; et al.; see also *Menachos* 85b.

The Greeks approved of the Jews preserving the “oil” — the wisdom and study of the Torah. The Greeks desired, however, to contaminate the oil, making it **impure**. They aimed to sever the wisdom of the Torah from the **holiness** of the Torah and the Giver of the Torah (“**Your** Torah”).

This is one reason that Hashem engineered the miracle of finding a crucible of pure oil — despite it being permissible to use impure oil to light the menorah because {of the law that} impurity is permitted in a congregation⁵⁵ — for the victory of Chanukah promotes the principle that it should be “**Your** Torah” — **pure** oil.

This is similar to what was discussed earlier (about the idea that “there was no water in it...”). Specifically, the Torah’s aspect of “water” — *bittul* to the Giver of the Torah — prevents the presence of “snakes and scorpions.”

Chanukah shares a similar theme. Specifically by kindling the Chanukah lights (with **pure oil**) will “the footsteps of the people of *Tarmod*, תרמוד, cease”⁵⁶ — “*Tarmod*”⁵⁷ having the same letters as “*moredes*, מורדת {rebel}”:⁵⁸ As long as *pure* oil (“**Your** Torah”) is missing, rebellion (“**moredes**”) against Hashem (“you turn astray — **and serve...**”) is still conceivable.

By kindling the Chanukah lights “at the entrance to one’s house, **on the outside**,”⁵⁹ so that the “outside” is also illuminated, “the footsteps of the people of *Tarmod* **cease**” even “from the marketplace,” and with finality. In other words, the notion of “*moredes*” is dispelled completely (even the “**footsteps**” — its lowest level) until the darkness of exile is illuminated, and we bring about the true and final redemption, soon, in actuality.

— From talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Vayeishev*, 5736 (1975) and the second day of Shavuot, 5732 (1972)

⁵⁵ *Yoma* 6b; et al. {“*tumah hutrah betzibur*”}.

⁵⁶ *Shabbos*, loc. cit.

⁵⁷ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 448, marginal fn.

⁵⁸ *Eimek HaMelech*, “*Shaar Kiryas Arba*,” beg. of ch. 111; *Kehillas Yaakov*, “*Tarmod*”; et al. (see fn. in *Likkutei Sichos*, ibid.); see also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 811, fn. 3 (regarding the allusion to this in the revealed Torah).

⁵⁹ {*Shabbos* 21b.}